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31 January 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence  
THROUGH : Director of Current Intelligence  
SUBJECT : Seminar on Area Security and Development (Pacification) held at Camp H. M. Smith, Hawaii during the week of 6 January 1969

General Observations

1. This seminar was hosted by CINCPAC and the RAND Corporation of California. The latter firm is facilitating the exchange of information by civilian contractors working on pacification as part of its ongoing Vietnam work for the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) of the Department of Defense. Representatives from at least 14 civilian operations research firms and spokesmen from a number of government agencies including CINCPAC, CORDS/MACV, AID (Washington and Saigon), Department of State, and SACSA/JCS attended the conference.

2. The agenda included a briefing on pacification by a representative of CORDS/MACV and the papers by civilian researchers on such topics as village defense, area security, and civil and police operations. There were also panels on security, political factors, psychological factors, information and evaluation systems, and civil operations.

3. The objectives of the seminar were to study the problems associated with pacification and to offer suggestions to improve ongoing programs and/or offer new programs. The conferees were also to consider (1) the "transfer problem"--getting the government of Vietnam to assume all the managerial, fiscal, and operational burdens of pacification; (2) security in a post-hostilities environment; and, (3) the lessons the US has learned in Vietnam which we may be able to apply to future policies and programs. This was an ambitious agenda which was only partially fulfilled.

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4. The seminar was not convened primarily to make a critical evaluation of the present US effort, but much of the open discussion turned into a running debate between the "operators"--those involved in the attempted execution of the pacification related programs--and the "theorists", or operations analysts, on the merits, application and effectiveness of US pacification efforts in South Vietnam. One thing became rather apparent to me early in the discussions: CORDS/MACV and other government agencies were adamant in their defense of what they were doing and the way they were doing it, while many of the contractors seemed to feel that, despite assurances, the US lacked an integrated strategy in Vietnam with relatively clear national objectives against which programs and progress could be measured. Although many of the criticisms made by the contractors had some merit, they often reflected a general lack of detailed information on the multitude of tasks the US has undertaken in South Vietnam. Most of the operations research personnel do not appear to have had as much access to detailed information on the conduct of the Vietnam war as they had in other wars, such as Korea and World War II, nor do their completed studies and recommendations seem to have much impact on US undertakings. RAND and IDA representatives generally agreed with this impression in private conversations. Coincidentally, I found attendees from these two organizations to be more aware of US plans and programs in South Vietnam and to have more balanced opinions.

5. The US military took something of a brow-beating from several of the operations research personnel there, particularly from Herman Kahn and his associates from the Hudson Institute. I found some of the criticisms directed against the US military's role in Vietnam unwarranted from a substantive standpoint. Most criticisms of the US military effort were delivered in a particularly tactless manner.

6. I attended two of the panels: political factors and civil operations. The former was chaired by CINCPAC's political advisor and was to have discussed pacification as a political program in South Vietnam, but it hardly touched on this subject. Discussion ran far afield, and individual comments included a criticism of the US press for its coverage of the Vietnam war, and several persons remarked on the impact of the

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Communists' Tet offensive everywhere but in South Vietnam. Many of the opinions expressed seem to me to be personally biased or reflected a lack of access to information concerning the general political situation in South Vietnam. In my opinion, I (and the seminar) gained little or nothing from this panel.

7. The second panel, on civil operations, made more of a contribution to the seminar's goals. This panel discussed in greater detail several of the ongoing pacification programs which had been mentioned in earlier briefings. This panel also touched on the impact of friendly activities on the populace's attitudes, the political content of pacification programs, and the changes in US AID programs over the past several years.

8. In sum, I feel that my attendance at this conference was of substantial benefit to me in my position as OCI's analyst for pacification. I learned a great deal about the 1969 pacification plan and the computer-based evaluation systems now in operation and those being developed. In the latter field, I acquired for the first time detailed information about the revised Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) and Territorial Forces Evaluation System (TFES). I might add that some of the operations researchers are skeptical of CORDS data collection and evaluation techniques and a number of criticisms were levelled against the manner in which HES data are collected.

9. It seems somewhat strange, however, that I should have to go to Honolulu to hear CORDS brief a group of civilian contractors on plans and programs, information which should have found its way to OCI long before this. This leads me to another observation, one which I have felt strongly about for some time but which has been reinforced as a result of my attendance at this conference. Since early 1968, the quality and quantity of information concerning pacification and associated activities that has come to OCI has been markedly reduced. Conversations at the conference with government personnel and civilian contractors and, since my return, with INR analysts, suggests that the present CORDS organization hinders any in-depth reporting by independent observers on pacification. The general consensus is that this problem needs clarification at the Washington level.

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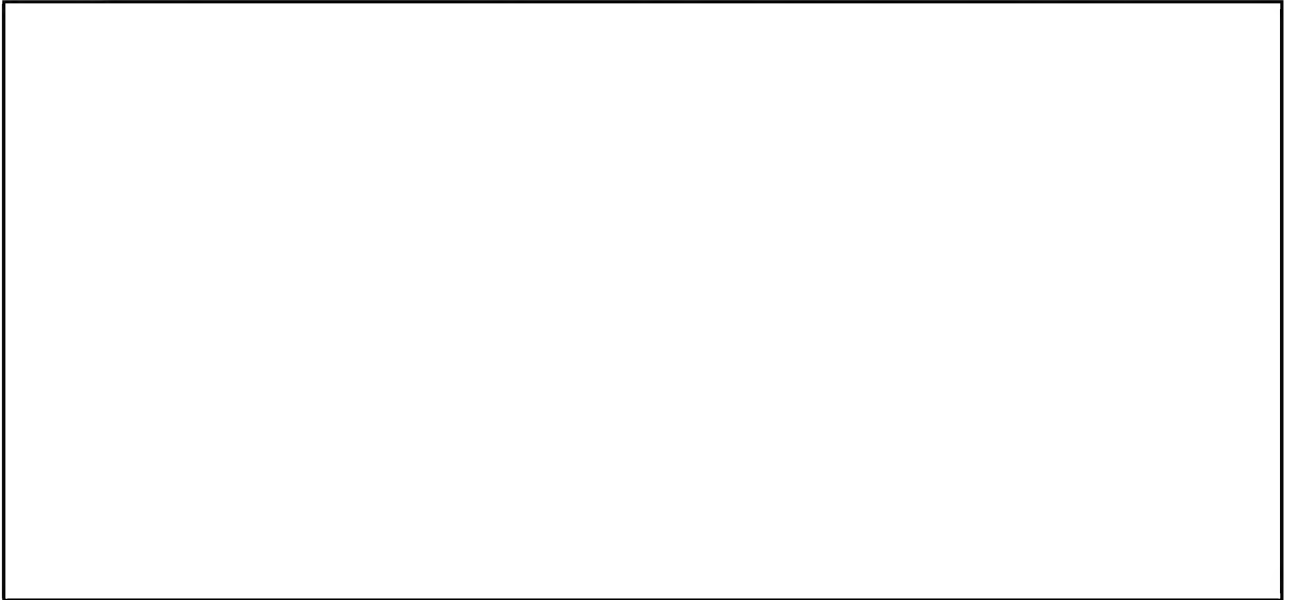
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10. I would also like to add that I was well received by the other people attending this seminar and that all the civilian contractors I came into contact with expressed high regard for the Agency.

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